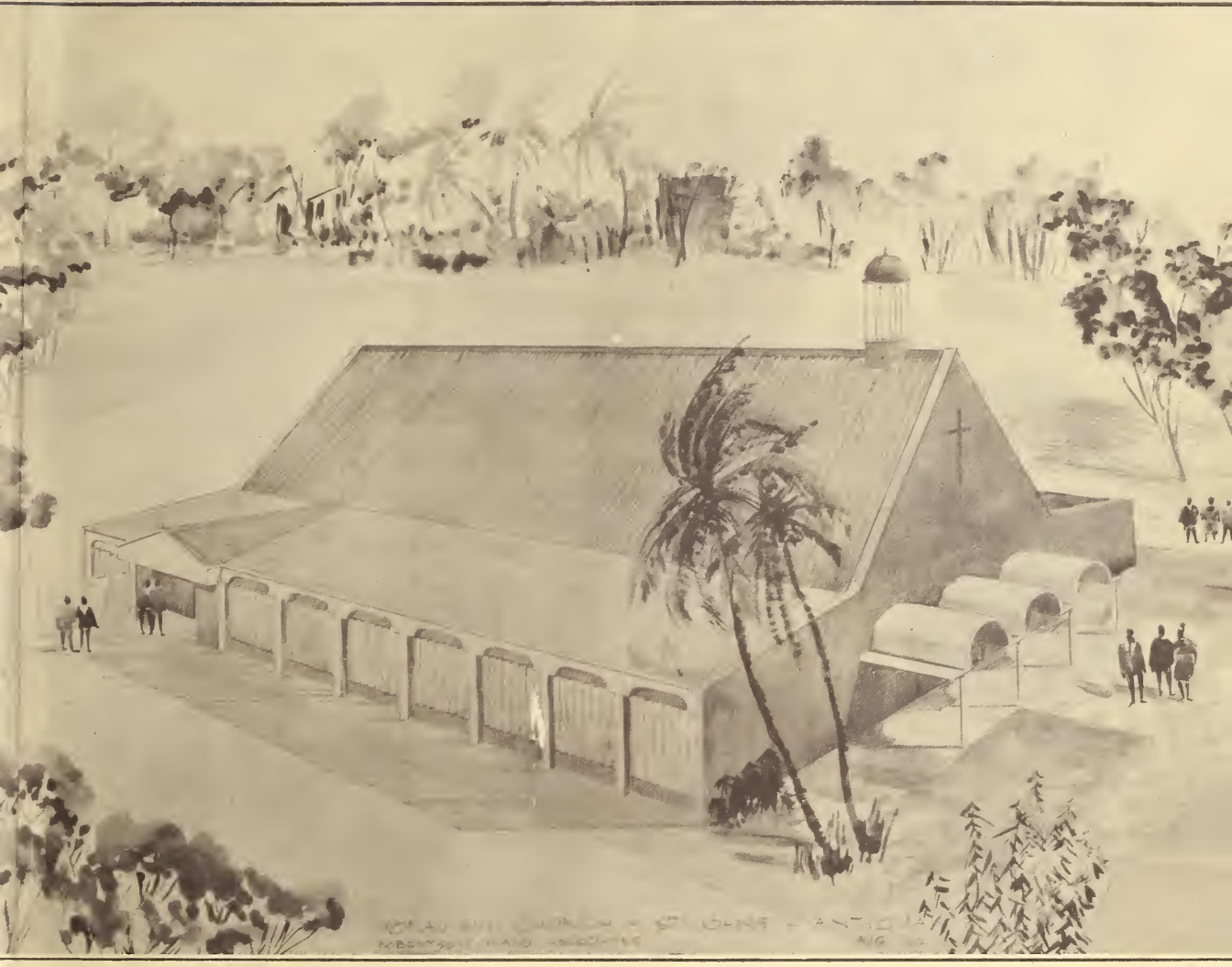
We Build



EXTERIOR OF PROPOSED CHURCH

Spring Gardens Moravian Church

ST. JOHNS, ANTIGUA, B.W.I.

To Serve

Building with a Past

"Remember the days of old,
Consider the year of many generations;
Ask tny father, and he will tell thee;
Thine elders, and they will show thee." DEUT. 32:7

JOHN HUS

The original home of the Unitas Fratrum or 'Unity of the Brethren' was Moravia a province of present-day Czechoslovakia, hence its popular name — the Moravian Church. The freedom-loving spirit of those peoples and their recollection of the gospel message in their native tongue—as had been preached by Cyril and Methodius, Greek priests and earliest missionaries to this region — brought the Bohemians to a parting-of-the-ways with the Medieval Church and its practices. This spirit of reform became embodied in the life and work of John Hus, the spiritual father of the Moravian Church. Through his instrumentality, a reformation was begun in Bohemia and Moravia, a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther in Germany in the 16th Century.

Born at Husinec, Moravia, in 1369, Hus grew to be a man of great learning and evangelical piety. A priest of the Roman church, professor at the University of Prague and preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel (the Queen's church), Hus searched the scriptures diligently and brought his people a realization that true religion was not based on external allegiance to a church, but on inward fellowship with God expressing itself in true Christian conduct and holiness of life. Never intending to break with the Roman church, Hus began to plead for a reform of its life and doctrine, based on the inescapable directive of scripture. Incurring disfavor with the hierarchy, he was summoned to the Council of Constance. Promised a fair trial and safe conduct, Hus willingly went to be examined by the learned men of the church. Upon his arrival, he was imprisoned, refused the opportunity to defend himself and condemned before his trial was ever begun. On July 6th, 1415, John Hus was burned at the stake as a 'heretic'. But the truth for which he died could not be killed; and his influence lived on in the hearts of his people. From the ashes of Hus there arose a movement which in the purpose of God was to become — the Moravian Church.

COUNT ZINZENDORF

By 1457 his followers were convinced that Hus' desired reforms could never be brought about within the established church, so many of them separated themselves into the Unitas Fratrum which, in spite of persecution flourished in Bohemia and spread to Poland. In 1501 was produced the first Protestant hymnbook; 1502, a catechism; and by 1593, the Kralitz Bible — a translation of scripture into the Bohemian language. But with the Thirty Years War a wave of persecution arose which all but wiped out this Moravian church. But a 'Hidden Seed' was kept alive, largely through the efforts of John Amos Comenius, the same Comenius whose work as a pioneer in modern educational methods is still recognized by secular educators throughout the world. Invited to become the first president of Harvard University, Bishop Comenius declined in favor of caring for his scattered flock of brethren.

SPRING GARDENS MORAVIAN CHURCH

Ministers

THE REV. G. OLIVER MAYNARD
THE REV. DAVID M. HENKELMANN, B.A., B.D.

Church Committee

T. O'REILLY, H. SCHOLAR, G. LEWIS, H. MURDOCK, B. KNIGHT, E. SCHOLAR, C. ISAAC, W. ROBERTS, L. GORE

Building Committee

B. CARROTT, G. TOMLINSON, H. SCHOLAR, L. GORE, S. BENJAMIN

Board of Helpers

M. PHILLIPS, J. KENTISH, E. JOSEPH, S. KNIGHT, J. SAMUEL, E. JACOBS, G. CHARLES, M. GORE, M. CARROTT, L. SWIFT, S. MARTIN, H. TANNER, V. TERRY, E. SCHOLAR, W. ROBERTS, I. DAVIS

Antigua Island Conference
Moravian Church, East West Indies Province

J. KNIGHT, B.A., Superintendent
P. GUBI, EP. FR.
W. GRAMLEY, B.A., B.D.
G. OLIVER MAYNARD, Warden
N. BROWN
D. HENKELMANN, B.A., B.D.

OLD BURIAL GROUND

OLD MISSION HOUSE

TRAINING COLLEGE

WESTERBY MEMORIAL

ORGAN

The Moravian Church was renewed when an itinerant carpenter, Christian David, one of the brethren, met a German nobleman, Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf, early in the 18th Century. On hearing of the trials of the brethren, Zinzendorf offered them refuge on his estate of Berthelsdorf in Saxony. To this spot came Moravian refugees on June 8, 1722, calling the village they created, Herrnhut . . . "the place that God will guard." And God did guard it and nurtured it through times of stress both with the German Lutherans of the area and with non-Moravians who became attached to the steady streams of refugees. Zinzendorf became a spiritual father to the Moravians — and eventually one of its ministers — visiting from house to house, praying with the people and urging them toward love for one another.

On August 13, 1727 — the spiritual 'birthday' of the renewed Moravian Church — while sharing in Communion at the Lutheran Church in Berthelsdorf, the brethren experienced the real presence of the Holy Spirit in such a powerful way that after they confessed their sins to one another, the breach between the two communities was healed and all rededicated their lives to the service of the Lord with new vigor. One immediate expression was a 'Prayer Watch', 24 hours a day, which continued unbroken for over a century. Five years later Moravians left Herrnhut on the first phase of a world-wide missionary endeavor which began . . . in St. Thomas, Danish West Indies, bringing the gospel of God's salvation to the slaves.

The story of the planting of the church in the West Indies reads like an 18th Century 'Acts of the Apostles'. Here is how it began . . . At the Coronation of King Christian VI of Denmark, Zinzendorf met one Anthony Ulrich, a negro slave from St. Thomas who had come with his master for the occasion. So moved was Zinzendorf by his tale of the conditions and hardships of the slaves and their need for the gospel, that he arranged for Anthony to go to Herrnhut and tell the brethren. Two — Leonard Dober and David Nitschmann — volunteered to go; and knowing full well the difficult road ahead, set out with 18 shillings between them, arriving in St. Thomas on December 13, 1732. Earning their living by doing whatever odd jobs they could find, they preached among the slaves whenever the opportunity arose. In 1734 others from Herrnhut, laymen and clergy alike arrived — in St. Croix — but 21 out of these 29 died within a year. It can truly be said that the gospel in these West Indian islands was founded on the sacrifice of men and women who gave their lives in the service of Christ Jesus.

Thus began the first major undertaking of missionary activity by a Protestant Church, an endeavor which spread to St. John in 1741, to Jamaica in 1754, to Antigua in 1756, Barbados in 1765 and St. Kitts in 1777, not to mention other simultaneous work among the peoples of Africa, Central America, the Guianas, and the North American Indians.

The work in Antigua was begun by Samuel Isles on April 1, 1756. Armed with the enactment of Parliament which recognized the Moravian Church and encouraged support of its mission activity, Isles was granted the necessary permission by the governor and began work among the slaves on the estate of Gambles. Joined by Peter Brown in 1769, these men worked in the midst of intolerable conditions, opposed by many of the planters, maintaining themselves as there was little in the way of financial support from abroad. Though the early years must have seemed singularly fruitless, yet by 1791 when Brown was forced to retire because of ill health and returned to Bethlehem, Pa., some 7000 Christian slaves stood out as living witness to their work.

By 1760 land had been purchased in St. Johns as a base for missionary operations which led to the establishing of congregations in all parts of the island. The bodies of forty missionaries interred in the old burial ground at Spring Gardens are silent testimony to the labor of love of these 'Herrnhuters.'

According to many authorities the work done in the West Indies helped create the climate that along with powerful political and economic forces paved the way for emancipation. It is recorded that when many argued against freeing the slaves for fear of their rising up and turning against the white men, Wilberforce answered them to the effect that Moravians had so taught them to respect law and order that they were indeed prepared to receive the great gift of liberty.

With the emancipation of the slaves in 1834, the Moravians expanded their work in education by establishing schools. Prior to this they had trained slaves to teach their fellow-slaves the rudiments of education, even granting tuition where permitted for them to qualify as teachers. In 1854 the Spring Gardens Teachers Training College was founded by Bishop George Westerby — a college which during its life made a great contribution not only to the schools of Antigua but to most of the islands of the West Indies as well. Today, by the Administration Building in St. Johns, stands a memorial to Bishop Westerby, erected by the public for his contribution to the life of the community especially in the field of education. Moravian day schools were likewise strong in preparing many Moravians and non-Moravians alike who have assumed responsible leadership in every aspect of our community today.

Social concern was early expressed by the founding of the 'Friendly Society' in 1834 to help with the burying of the dead, relieving those in distress, the poor and the aged. This concern found later expression in support of the public institutions set up to carry on this work — the Board of Guardians and the Infirmary. Early concern for developing sound home and family life was reflected in many systematic practices (which may seem humorous to us today) such as "presenting a pig to every child born in wedlock."

In music likewise the Moravians were in no small way influential even beyond their own members in bringing the music of the masters to Antigua, and encouraging the highest possible level of church music in the island. Today compositions by these brethren, gifted in expressing their faith through music, are being rediscovered and sent to the waiting world of music.

In historical summation, the work of the Moravian Church has continued through many avenues to contribute to the life of the peoples and communities of Antigua. In recent years however it has met with some difficulty in maintaining the previous pace because of the financial challenges of a changing situation around us. Since it was a German-centered church, two World Wars have taken their toll; of political necessity the work had to be turned over to the Moravian Church of England whose responsibility in other areas of the world already were taxing it to its limit. Following World War II the brethren in America offered to help with finances and manpower.

PRESENT CHURCH

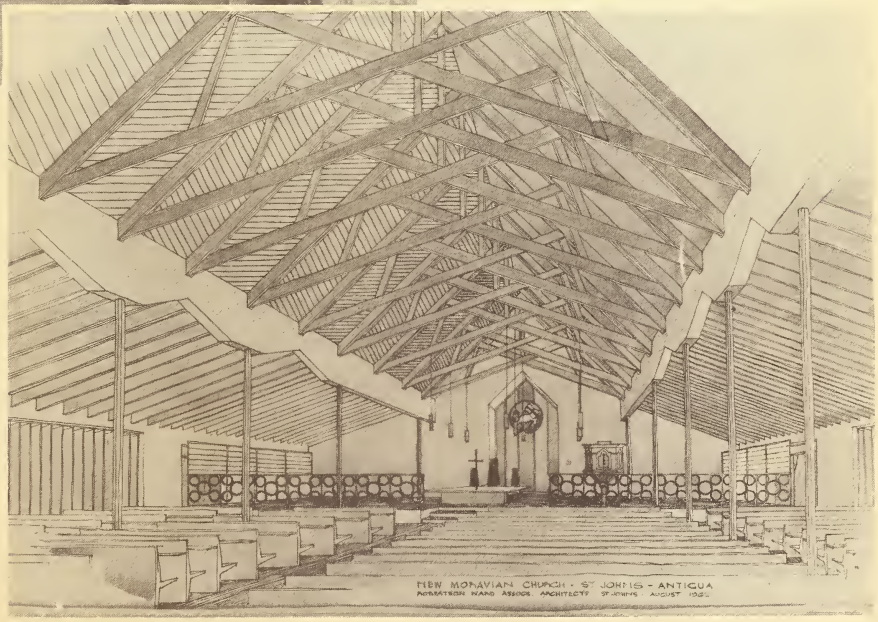
Now . . . in as many ways as possible we are moving toward becoming a fully self-supporting church. Our West Indian ministry is being trained at Union Theological Seminary in Jamaica where along with five other Protestant denominations we are endeavoring to bring the benefits of higher education and new techniques to our churches and their work. A Board of Christian Education has been created to increase the effectiveness of our Sunday Schools and introduce the latest methods and practices of adult and youth education alike to our people. Each year efforts are being made to restore and where necessary replace buildings which have served Antigua and its people well and faithfully for many years.

BUT WITH AN EYE TO THE FUTURE . . .

We know we must be building for the future . . .

INTERIOR OF PRESENT CHURCH

PROPOSED CHURCH — INTERIOR



A House of Worship

The earliest place of worship was of God's own providing — the Sandbox Tree. Under its 200 year-old branches, the slaves gathered to worship Him who had freed them from spiritual bondage. Then the present structure was built serving many generations as a 'house of prayer'. Now — its strength weakened by time and termite — it must be closed.

OLD YEAR'S NIGHT WORSHIP

But still . . . MAN NEEDS AND LONGS TO WORSHIP!

So, a new structure must rise,
ever ready to house
the old and traditional
and
the new, creative
forms
of a grateful peoples' worship!

DRAMA

About the new church:

The new church will be located on the land just east of the Mission House and former Training College, facing Dickinson Bay Street. A structure of contemporary architecture, seating over 1000 worshippers, it will incorporate the typical Moravian-style belfry and the pulpit and communion table of the present structure . . . thus sharing the 'past' with the future generations.

A House

OUR CHILDREN . . .
must learn the foundation of their faith.

SUNDAY SCHOOL HARVEST PROGRAM

AND WE,
OURSELVES . . .

must study with our fellows if he 'would see Jesus' as a person and power today!

About the new church:

Two separate choir sections will be provided in the front of the sanctuary; the present organ will be installed in the new building

# of Learning

But man does not live by formal worship alone, but by every learning that proceeds from the Father — the growing knowledge of God's will and ways. The man who has stopped learning . . . has stopped being a man.

OUR YOUTH . . .

must grapple with this faith if it is to be real in their awakening life.

with the addition of several new 'stops'. The lighting of the new sanctuary will include facilities for the expression and presentation of the Gospel in drama.

A House of Fellowship

. . . providing a 'spiritual home' in which to share the DIFFICULTIES . . . and learn the JOYS of living together as God's family.

Such fellowship is accomplished only by the grace of God!

CHOIR

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

RELAXATION AND STUDY

HOLY COMMUNION

About the new church:

Provision is being made for adequate parking facilities for approximately 50 cars. Landscaping for the new building will include restoration of the old cemetery, and many of the gravestones will be returned to their original resting places.

Additional folding-chairs and storage space will enable areas of the church to be versatile in their use, and will provide extra seating for special services.

A House of Service

. . . caring for our church's temporal needs;

CHURCH BUILDING COMMITTEE

. . . her peoples' spiritual needs;

BOARD OF HELPERS

KING'S DAUGHTERS — SEWING GROUP

. . . and the needs of God's children whatever those needs may be and wherever those needs are found!

About the new church:

In addition to the worship facilities, the new structure will contain both a vestry; and a church office; also a private room for counselling services rendered by the pastors.

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